

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting

held on Wednesday 24 May 2017

Present Joanne Williams (*Interim Principal*), Jane Chan, Karen Cocker, Peter Coley, Geoffrey Elliott, Mark Johnson, Allison Matthews.

In attendance Jacquie Carman (*Director of Finance and Corporate Services*)
Julia Stevens (*Organisational Development Director*)
John Murray (*Interim Faculty Director Creative Arts*)
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, Karen Cocker was elected by members present to chair the meeting.

Members agreed that agenda item 7, Creative Arts Faculty Report from John Murray would be taken as the first substantive item and that the order of the remaining agenda would be modified. Items are recorded here in the revised order.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Ian Jewkes, Helene Jones and Jamie Fox.

2 Declarations of Interest

In relation to agenda item 8.3, Memorandum of Understanding, Joanne Williams, Jacquie Carman and Karen Cocker declared interests in respect of their roles with The Halesowen Foundation, South Black Country Education and Halesowen College Enterprises.

3 Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 26 April 2017

The minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 26 April 2017 were approved as a correct record.

The Clerk reported that all actions scheduled for May 2017 would be taken under the Agenda.

7.1 Creative Arts Faculty Report

Interim Faculty Director for Creative Arts, John Murray gave a presentation to members on performance data, monitoring, progress and areas of focus for the subjects within the Faculty.

Success rates were down in 2016 which had been due to retention rates. In year data indicated expected improvements. However, it was recognised that a significant proportion of students studying Hair and Beauty left their course to take up employment.

In response to questions from Mark Johnson about incentivising students to complete a qualification before leaving, Jacquie Carman responded that it would be ideal if students transferred to an Apprenticeship which could now be achieved and would not penalise the College retention data.

John Murray highlighted attendance, progress made in lessons, students being clear about their targets, including those for maths and English, a wide range of assessment mechanisms, embedding British Values in lessons, use of ICT and student, parent and employer views.

Key strengths, areas for development and risks to the Faculty were explained. The declining number of expressive arts students remained challenging. New Technical Qualifications were also challenging, particularly in Hair and Beauty, as they changed the nature of information on which students would be tested.

Members asked a range of questions to understand the challenges for students and staff in the Faculty's subject areas.

Mark Johnson and Karen Cocker asked if the new Technical Qualifications were a positive progression in student skill development and Karen Cocker asked if the change in approach would have adverse reactions. Joanne Williams responded that the new qualifications were good for some subjects but not those who combined them with A level, seeking a University route. Joanne Williams also noted that a lot of support would be needed for the new qualifications, therefore a pilot scheme would be undertaken in the first instance.

Karen Cocker asked about student feedback and IT equipment reliability. Jacquie Carman explained that while this was an issue some of the time, a dedicated Apple Mackintosh technician had been unaffordable.

Geoffrey Elliott commended the report's use of data placed into context, which met governor information needs effectively. Jacquie Carman and John Murray expanded on the College use of individual targets and following BKSB testing, addressing each student's needs within their course programme. As this was more challenging in some subject areas, the Faculty had looked to build up a bank of tasks and how these could be utilised and embedded over the whole course programme.

Jacquie Carman further highlighted the development of a new College approach to tackle English and maths attendance and success for 2017/2018. Following school systems staff would be utilising tablets and a STaRS application for real time monitoring, and follow up of students who were not in their timetabled class. Joanne Williams informed members that there were 1,367 students sitting maths resits at the College on 25 May 2017.

The report was received.

8.2 Student Financial Support Policies 2017/18

Jacque Carman explained that the ethos of providing financial support through the funding agency agreement remained that of getting resources to students most in need, to support them to remain in education.

Within the updated policies the financial threshold had been revised in relation to movement in the National Living Wage. Further change incorporated the Funding Agency changed definition, whereby students who started their programme at 16, 17 and 18 years of age classified and could apply through the scheme.

Governors noted that a third of Halesowen College students received support, most of whom were on the highest band. The support was very important with clear impact and was therefore promoted to students early in their communications with the College, to ensure support could be in place when students started their programme.

The Corporation resolved to approve the revised Student Financial Support policies:

- 16-19 Bursary Fund
- Discretionary Learner Support 19+
- 19+ Advanced Learning Loans Bursary Fund
- Further Education Free Meals

8.3 Memorandum of Understanding

Jacque Carman provided the revised Memorandum of Understanding with Halesowen College Enterprises 2017/18.

The Corporation resolved to approve the revised Memorandum of Understanding with Halesowen College Enterprises 2017/18.

4 Governance

4.1 Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee – 11 May 2017

The minutes were received.

4.2 Corporation Appointments

The Clerk reported that the Search and Governance Committee had met with Louise Jones, Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor at the University of Worcester.

The Clerk outlined that Louise's professional background and her willingness to undertake the role had been discussed by the Committee prior to their recommendation to the Corporation.

Members recommended the strong basis of the recommendation.

On recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee the Corporation resolved to appoint Louise Jones as a governor of Halesowen College, for one year commencing 1 August 2017, subject to meeting eligibility criteria.

4.3 Corporation Self-Assessment and External Review Action Plan

In looking at the detailed actions proposed in the Halesowen College Governing Body Good to Outstanding Action Plan members responded to the areas highlighted by the Clerk.

It was felt that planned participation should be understood as voluntary and not a requirement. However, a success measure of minimum expectation against actions should also be applied where appropriate.

Karen Cocker asked how the actions would be rolled out and the Clerk responded that these would be addressed by the Clerk's and Principal's offices in line with timescales proposed and that the plan should be monitored monthly by the Corporation.

Members agreed that the new questionnaire for governor self-assessment was acceptable, noting that it was more indepth than the previous questionnaire used.

The Corporation approved the Halesowen College Governing Body Good to Outstanding Action Plan with the actions provided and that the plan be monitored at monthly Corporation meetings.

The Corporation approved the Self-Assessment questionnaire and interview process for 2017.

4.4 Annual Calendar and Cycle of Business 2017/2018

The Clerk explained that the revised calendar had been provided as agreed by members.

Members further noted that the meeting scheduled for July 2017 might not be required.

The Corporation approved the revised Calendar and the Cycle of Business for 2017/2018.

5 Strategic Overview

5.1 HEFCE Annual Provider Review Final Outcome

The outcomes of the Annual Provider Review from HEFCE was received noting that no action was required.

5.2 Review of the Post Inspection Action Plan

Joanne Williams reported that the Post Inspection Action Plan had been RAG rated with most areas rated as green. Stretch and challenge and high grade achievement remained persistently challenging for the College. However, work addressing these areas was continuing.

Members understood and agreed that the Quality Improvement Action Plan was a more current document for governors to monitor.

5.3 Department for Education League Tables

Jacquie Carman noted that as the Department for Education league tables did not address all of the College's qualifications, members had sought more data. Therefore in-year retention data, as nationally benchmarked, had been considered and provided for members. The four year data trend was positive and any areas of retention below target were being addressed.

5.4 Labour Market Trends and Initiatives Action Plan

Following receipt of a summary of labour market trends governors had requested an associated action plan. The responding plan focused on the College strengths and included consideration of the highest concentration of local jobs, results of the science and innovation audit regarding the skills that will impact on the future, Level 4 provision, progression to Higher Education and adult recruitment, and continuation of English and maths provision.

5.5 Safeguarding Update

Joanne Williams reported with sadness that the locally reported death of a young woman had been that of an ex student of the College. The College had engaged with Dudley Psychology and Counselling Service to provide psychological first aid to students and staff.

Joanne Williams also provided an update on referrals to social services and adult social care in the previous month and the range of issues that were arising. Jane Chan and Joanne Williams further reported on pockets of gang related activity and liaison with the Police.

Joanne Williams also noted the gap in adult mental health services being encountered when addressing problems.

5.6 Review of FE Ofsted Inspection Reports

Joanne Williams reported that Dudley College had been awarded the Outstanding Grade from their Ofsted Inspection.

In reviewing March Ofsted reports a range of areas were identified on both what it is for a College to be good and what key improvements are needed.

Members noted that the College had continued to make progress against these identified areas and was able to provide good examples.

5.7 Register of Apprenticeships and Training Providers Update

Jacquie Carman confirmed that Halesowen College was now on the Register of Apprenticeships and Training Providers and required a prompt planned response to address workflows, build capacity and assure robust processes were in place.

With reference to staff and approach, a strong customer focused team was necessary with the skills to support employers through the Apprenticeship process. An experienced and proactive senior manager was in place with a

further manager being addressed. Assessor roles would require filling against local competition.

Karen Cocker asked about investment costs and potential income streams. Jacquie Carman outlined whole year costs and the firm belief in increased income streams. However, there was potential impact on the financial health rating of the College moving from Outstanding to Good.

Joanne Williams reported on a few examples of student success which included a student participating in a catering competition at the Dorchester Hotel, two Travel and Tourism students completing their course early and gaining their wings and a Level 1 student who had done very well during work experience through the Canal Trust and was continuing as a volunteer.

Jane Chan left the meeting

6 Monthly Performance Information

6.1 Finance

Members noted the monthly performance data including the new 'at a glance' performance chart.

6.2 Students Learning and Teaching

Members accepted the summary of student applications information, including analysis of equal opportunities data. Both ethnicity and gender data remained similar to the previous year. Key variation included less applications from 17 year olds, growth in 19-23 applications, reduced recruitment for Access to Higher Education and growth in Apprenticeships.

6.3 Staff and Accommodation

Jacquie Carman referred members to consideration of teaching staff deployment changes. Irregularity in deployment was unsustainable and required a new approach, therefore options had been put before staff.

Members discussed manager roles, learning support and timescales.

The monthly performance information was received.

7 Students, Teaching and Learning

7.2 Learning and Teaching Assessment Report – Quality Review and Development

Julia Stevens highlighted headline findings from the review of teaching and learning. Lesson observations stood at 92% good or outstanding, which was slightly below the 95% target. Trends emerging echoed the themes outlined in the Creative Arts Faculty Report including good feedback in lessons, stretch and challenge, good links between theory and practice and promotion of British Values. Embedding Mathematics was again noted as harder to achieve.

The report was received.

7.3 Student Charter

Members noted that student and parental responses largely concurred with management assessment and illustrated the support provided. Areas highlighted included the ongoing development of IT to meet student need and a drop in UCAS numbers, which reflected a national trend. The College was focused on increasing alternative Higher Level Apprenticeships.

Karen Cocker asked about the fall in take up of nursery placements by students. Joanne Williams reported that this required review.

The report was received.

8 Finance Reports

8.1 Review of Activities (Charities Act and Associated Legislation)

Jacque Carman provided the annual review of the relevant responsibilities of the Corporation to ensure that these remained within the College's remit and of public benefit.

All activities had been RAG rated and amber rated areas were highlighted. An associated action plan was also provided.

With reference to the recent letter from Peter Lauener regarding regularity, propriety and value for money, members received a self-evaluation report against the areas noted and a report against the Ten Principal Responsibilities of Good Governance.

Under Review of Activities the Corporation confirmed that all green and amber rated activities are within the powers of Halesowen College.

8.4 Finance Record Comparative

Collated records from the Funding Agency illustrated that Halesowen College compared well against the sector, tertiary colleges and local colleges.

The report was noted.

9 Any other business

Members noted the forthcoming end of office term and thanked Geoffrey Elliott for his service to the College as a governor.

10 Date of next meeting

The Clerk confirmed that the date of the next meeting was 28 June 2017.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

Actions from Meetings			
Ref	Agenda item and action	Date/item for review	Reported by
Corporation Meeting 28 September 2016			
8.1	Report from Faculty Director - A Level Director, Louise Craddock	Sept 2017	JWi
8.1a	Joanne Williams agreed that results to be provided by Faculty Area would provide a different view.	ongoing	
Corporation Meeting 30 November 2016			
6.1a	College Self-Assessment Report and Development Plan	2018	JWi
	It was agreed that more detail about grades for pass and fail and value added would enhance governor understanding.		
Corporation Meeting 1 March 2017			
9.3	West Midlands Superannuation Scheme	July 2017	JWi/JCa
9.3a	The Corporation noted the position and the risks with the West Midlands Superannuation Scheme and approved that the Principal and Director of Finance and Corporate Services explore alternatives for future Corporation consideration.		
Corporation Meeting 26 April 2017			
6.2	Student Applications Update	August 2017	JWi
6.2a	The College approach to marketing was discussed with members agreeing that a more proactive marketing strategy should be developed.		